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AUTHOR Walker, Dean
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ABSTRACT

The solution to the problem of violence in the schools lies not only in the protection of students, but the prevention of aggressive, antisocial behavior. This monograph is designed to help schools build a violence-prevention program from the ground up. Following the introduction, chapter 1 discusses how the causes and consequences of violence in the schools are inseparable from the roots of violence in American society. Chapter 2 examines the processes of assessing and establishing policies, programs, and facilities that research indicates are useful in preventing violence. Chapter 3 describes responsibilities at the district, school, and classroom levels. The fourth chapter provides an overview of violence-prevention programs under way in Oregon, including counseling programs, intensive primary prevention, a violence-prevention curriculum, conflict resolution and peer mediation, domestic-violence prevention, multicultural issues, anger management, substance abuse, and gangs. Outreach programs to involve students and the community are described in the final chapter. Information is based on a review of research and a total of 21 interviews conducted with juvenile counselors, school administrators, educators, a police officer, and program coordinators in Oregon. One table and a four-page condensation of the document ("Bulletin in Brief") are included. (LMI)

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VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

How To Build a Prevention Program from the Ground Up

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Dean Walker

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1787 Agate Street
College of Education
5207 University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403-5207
(503) 346-5044
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Preface

Lock up the violent criminals and throw away the key. It's an approach that has undeniable appeal, particularly at a time when violence seems to be raging out of control. But how are we to deal with the growing number of violence-prone individuals who are making their way through our school systems? Are troubled children destined to become children in trouble and to engage in criminal behavior, or can we take steps to prevent violence, thereby making our schools safer and our society saner?

As chapter 1 of this Bulletin illustrates, our society helps shape violence behavior in children. As a society, we must examine the messages we are giving children and assume responsibility for establishing policies and programs to prevent violence. Chapters 2 and 3 examine the process of assessing and establishing policies, programs, and facilities that research indicates are useful in preventing violence. Chapters 4 and 5 look at a few of the programs being used in Oregon schools that have an impact on preventing violence.

Dean Walker received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, and a master's degree in counseling psychology from the University of Oregon. In addition to parenting three children and pursuing a doctorate in counseling psychology at the University of Oregon, he works as a child-development specialist in the Junction City School District and as a licensed professional counselor in private practice.

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Introduction

"By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning." This is the last of six National Education Goals adopted in 1989 by the president and the nation's fifty governors to serve as a framework for the current educational reform movement. Surveys within the last five years show that we are far from reaching goal 6, particularly in the area of school violence (Diane Aleem, Oliver Moles, and others 1993).

The National Association of School Security Directors estimates that each year there are 12,000 armed robberies, 270,000 burglaries, 204,000 aggravated assaults, 9,000 rapes, and 70,000 serious assaults on teachers by students in America's schools (James Johnson and others 1994). In a 1994 survey by the National League of Cities, only 11 percent of 700 communities ranging in size from rural to big city reported that violence was not a problem in their schools (Randy Arndt 1994).

The American public is alarmed, and so are educators who struggle to find ways to stem the growing epidemic. Said Hill Walker, professor of special education and rehabilitation at the University of Oregon, "Our society is in an incarceration frenzy in dealing with juvenile crime and violence, but we will never be able to incarcerate ourselves into a satisfactory solution to this social problem." While expulsion, suspension, and detention of violent students may be necessary at some point to protect the student body, Walker asserted that violence is learned behavior and is preventable. Preventable, that is, with a focused effort powered by an equitable share of social resources.

Walker noted, "The best delinquency *interventions* to date can only claim to be promising practices." However, early intervention that focuses on enhancing school-readiness skills, developing social skills, and building self-esteem is highly effective in the *prevention* of delinquency. The solution to the problem of violence lies in a comprehensive, persevering effort not only to protect students from the dangers of a violent society, but to prevent

children from developing and relying on aggressive behavior as a mode of conflict resolution, or as a phony prop intended to shore up shaky self-esteem. The aim of this OSSC Bulletin is to help schools build a violence-prevention program from the ground up.

Chapter 1

The School Violence Explosion: Causes and Consequences

> School is the place where, when you have to go there,
> they have to let you in.

With a little alteration, Robert Frost's famous line from his poem *The Death of the Hired Man* sums up the double edge of compulsory school attendance with regard to the problem of school violence. It helps us recognize the moral imperative to create emotional and physical safety in the environment where children are required to spend a major portion of their childhoods. It also elucidates the reason why it is so difficult to accomplish the task of turning schools into islands of peace in an ocean of violence.

"The school is the only agency in Oregon which is required to take in every child," said David Piercy, assistant superintendent for the Eugene Public Schools. With very few exceptions, all children must be served whether or not they exhibit antisocial behaviors or have a criminal record. Inevitably, the violence that permeates American society is exhibited by a portion of the student population. According to R. Craig Sautter (1995), "Over three million assorted crimes—about 11 percent of all crimes—occur each year in America's 85,000 public schools. That compares with one million crimes each year in America's workplaces." The causes and consequences of violence in the schools are inseparable from the roots of violence in the society in which schools are embedded.

No single factor has produced the proliferation of violence in our society. The roots of violence are tangled deeply in the social structure and in human physiology. No one denies that children are born with important temperamental differences—ask any parent with more than one child. But few would suggest that temperamentally difficult children are destined to

become violent. A large body of evidence indicates violence is ultimately a learned behavior. "I think violence can be explained on the basis of learning," said Leonard Eron, a psychology professor at the University of Michigan who has studied aggression for forty years. "Right from the start, children learn by observation; they learn by rewards and punishment" (quoted in JoAnna Natale 1994).

Learning is what schools are all about. With a broad understanding of the factors that come into play in teaching children violent behavior, educators can be better prepared to help their students learn instead to shun violence.

Poverty

Much violence results from the social injustice that is prevalent in our society. Today, one in every five children—or 20 percent—lives in poverty; among children under the age of six, the figure is 25 percent. As drastic reductions in basic services to low-income families have occurred during the last decade, there has been a concomitant increase in violence in homes, schools, and communities (National Association for the Education of Young Children 1993). Soaring unemployment among innercity youth breeds hopelessness. Without hope for sharing through productive work in the riches daily paraded before them, many youth take the shortcut of illicit profiteering offered by gang membership.

What can schools do about reducing poverty and unemployment? Alone, not much. But most schools have free breakfast and lunch programs to ensure that no one in the classroom is hungry. Forty-three percent of U.S. school districts have mentoring programs to provide at-risk children with frequent contact with an adult who cares about them (National School Boards Association 1993). Vocational training and partnerships with community businesses are in place in some school districts.

Domestic Violence

An estimated 2.7 million children were reported to child-protection agencies in 1991 as victims of neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, or emotional maltreatment. The number of children reported abused or neglected has tripled since 1980. Many more children have witnessed the abuse of a parent or sibling. It is estimated that one in every three women has been battered. Much domestic violence can be traced to drug or alcohol abuse (NAEYC).

In a study of violent delinquents, 75 percent reported they had been brutally physically abused as children. Eighty percent of those who batter women were either abused as children or witnessed abuse in their homes (National School Safety Center 1990).

It seems that American society has gotten caught up in a vicious cycle. As violence increases not only on the streets but in homes, children are exposed to its damaging effects. Those who are being raised in violence-filled homes often come to believe that violence is the preferred way to settle conflict. And children and young adults may turn to drug use to escape the emotional pain associated with being victimized. These children often bring violence into the schools, and when they grow up, many use violence as a tool to control their own families.

Can schools eradicate domestic disputes, or keep parents from abusing drugs or hitting their children? Perhaps not directly. But 38 percent of school districts in America do offer parent training (NSBA). Most provide children with information designed to help keep them from becoming victims of abuse. Excellent drug and alcohol prevention programs are available to students in many districts. More and more schools are collaborating with social-service or counseling agencies to provide family counseling at school. Training about signs of child abuse and the process of reporting abuse to child-protective agencies should be a part of every district's staff development program.

Exposure to Violence in Society and the Media

The United States is the most violent country in the industrialized world, leading the world in homicides, rapes, and assaults (C. Dodd 1993). Where exposure to the reality of violence in the home and the streets leaves off, the media takes up. By age 18, the average child will have viewed 26,000 killings on television (NAEYC). But this statistic doesn't even begin to capture the extent of media violence, which is endemic in movies, music, and video games. Even children's programming on television is rife with violent images. *TV Guide* reports that a violent incident is shown on television approximately every six minutes (M.W. Edelman 1993). The viewing of television violence has been significantly correlated with aggressive behavior in children as early as age 6 (L.D. Eron 1980).

Schools cannot control the TV remotes in American homes, or exert significant pressure on the businesses that ultimately finance or profit from TV violence and product spinoffs in the toy industry. But schools can help deprogram children, teaching them to be discerning consumers of media offerings. Schools can also help children recognize the consequences of real-life violence, and teach students peaceful ways of resolving conflict. Sixty-one percent of American school districts offer some combination of conflict resolution, mediation training, or peer mediation (NSBA).

Easy Access to Guns and Other Weapons

In 1990, handguns were used to kill 22 people in Great Britain, 13 in Sweden, 91 in Switzerland, 87 in Japan, 10 in Australia, 68 in Canada, and 10, 567 in the United States (Marie Hill and Frank Hill 1994). Guns obviously play a starring role in America's culture of violence. And children are getting in on the act.

On September 8, 1994, at Sweet Home High School in Linn County, Oregon, fifteen-year-old Joshua Rund shot classmate James Caldwell in the lower back as he walked into a classroom ("Two Plead Guilty in Shooting of Classmate" 1994). Fortunately, Caldwell survived. But the sense of safety among students and staff did not.

Although the actual use of guns in Oregon schools is still relatively rare, the presence of guns on the school grounds nationwide is quite common. In a survey of 11,635 students by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, 1 out of 5 students in grades 9 to 12 said they carry a weapon, in school and elsewhere, and 1 in 20 said they carry a firearm once a month (Millicent Lawton 1991).

Children have little trouble acquiring guns. A 1993 Louis Harris poll found that 59 percent of the nation's sixth- through twelfth-graders say they can get a handgun if they want one, usually from home (Joseph Wilson and Perry Zirkel 1994). Making guns less accessible might not reduce the number of violent incidents, but it could go a long way toward reducing the number of lethal incidents.

Clearly, schools do not dictate gun-control laws. However, they can work to keep guns off school grounds. Some 15 percent of U.S. school districts have decided that weapons are common enough in their schools to warrant the use of metal detectors. Thirty-one percent have declared gun-free zones. Thirty-six percent have security personnel in the school (NSBA). There are also specialized curricula that show teenagers the tragic consequences of using guns against people and that teach children about gun safety and how to reduce their chances of becoming victims of gun-related violence.

Ethnic or Racial Conflict

In 1989, a survey revealed that hate crimes or incidents reflecting racial hatred occurred in one-third of Los Angeles public schools. Typical incidents were name-calling, racial slurs, graffiti, and physical confrontations, but fighting, distribution of racist literature, and the use of guns, knives, and other weapons also occurred (P. Schmidt 1989). Racial or ethnic tensions exist not only in big cities like L.A., but in heterogeneous communities of all sizes. Even in Harrisburg, a small Oregon town of 2,000 residents,

tensions between white and Hispanic patrons of two neighboring businesses resulted in a 1992 Halloween night brawl. Tension permeates race relations in America, and conflict between racial or ethnic enclaves can quickly escalate into violence.

Schools have an opportunity to bring diverse groups together in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Muticultural celebrations and education about the diversity of ethnic backgrounds can increase intergroup mixing and acceptance. Racism-free zones have been declared in many schools. And some schools offer prejudice-reduction workshops (Joan Curcio and Patricia First 1993).

Gangs

Gangs are both a cause and a consequence of violence. Children who have been victims of some form of violence often have little hope of becoming significant to others in a productive way. Gangs offer recognition, a sense of "family," and sometimes an income. Violence is a way of life for gang members. It is often required for initiation into membership, and it is the method of choice for resolving conflict. Violence is the way into gang life, and sometimes seems the only way out of it (Natale).

Gang affiliation is not limited to poor people, or to youth who have led troubled lives. Members can be as young as eight years old, though interest in gangs among those at risk commonly surfaces around fifth or sixth grade. Gangs have become so visible that a gang mentality has permeated pop culture, influencing youth fashion, music, and values. In some cities, young people join gangs not because they are put at risk by any of the usual factors, but because they feel that it is dangerous not to (Joan Gaustad 1991).

In the past twenty-five years, gangs have spread from the nation's major metropolitan areas to smaller cities and suburbs, and even into rural areas. The Oregon State Youth Gang Strike Force documented nearly 2,700 gang affiliates in Oregon as of the summer of 1992 (Claire Levine 1992). Agencies and community members working on the "front lines" estimate the statewide total to be at least 5,000. The lucrative illegal drug market and clashes over turf or even perceived slights have fueled violence between rival gangs. This violence easily spills over onto school campuses. All too often, the victims are innocent bystanders (Gaustad).

The youth gang phenomenon is complex, and, like violence itself, no single approach will address the problems associated with it. Schools must work in concert with community agencies, particularly with the police force, in identifying gang members and responding swiftly and appropriately to gang-related incidents. There are curricula specifically aimed at gang prevention. When schools respond with preventive measures to address the myriad factors involved in the general upsurge in violence, their efforts contribute to reducing the problem of youth gangs.

Chapter 2

Blueprint for a Safe Haven: Assessment

Safe schools are created through a combination of vision, planning, and perseverance. Creating a blueprint for school safety requires a systematic assessment that starts at the district level and extends into the classroom. First, there must be a vision of what constitutes a safe school. This vision will help school board members and administrators to discern what areas must be addressed to create a school that is a safe haven. Educators can use the information in the remaining chapters of this Bulletin to guide them in fleshing out their vision.

Once an initial assessment is completed, changes must be made and programs implemented so the daily work of making the vision a reality can begin. This is work that will never be finished, as ongoing assessment provides insight into program successes and failures. Assessment also guides the redirecting of resources to meet the ever-changing challenges to school safety.

A Plan for Assessment

According to Renee Wilson-Brewer, former director of the National Network of Violence Prevention Practitioners, "If you're going to do violence prevention the right way, it would make sense to really understand the school system—the student population, the faculty population... the kinds of violence that have occurred, the community, and its social organization and lack of organization" (Millicent Lawton 1994).

In 1989, the California Department of Education and the attorney general's office published *Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action*, which is still used by many districts as a model for safe-school planning (Lee

Lundberg 1994). Beginning with the development of a climate for action, the planning guide calls for establishing a school-safety committee, setting goals, collecting data, then developing, implementing, and evaluating the plan (see sidebar).

It is likely that more than one person or group will be responsible for assessment at various levels. In 1993, in response to the tragic deaths of two high school students, the Los Angeles Unified School District created a safe-school planning committee for each school community. The committees, composed of administrators, teachers, parents, classified staff, and students, were charged with identifying specific problems at each school and recommending action (Isaacs 1994).

Safe School Planning Steps

1. **Develop the climate for action.**
   - Create and maintain a positive for critical review and action.
2. **Establish the committee.**
   - Solicit broad representation.
   - Integrate the committee with other school planning groups.
   - Promote collaborative planning efforts.
3. **Develop a vision and establish goals.**
   - Establish a clear vision of what is to be accomplished.
   - Brainstorm needs of the school.
   - Determine major goals.
   - Obtain school and community consensus.
4. **Collect and analyze data.**
   - Assess existing conditions.
   - Review existing data sources.
   - Gather additional quantitative and qualitative data through formal and informal processes.
   - Identify areas of pride and strength.
   - Identify areas needing improvement or change.
5. **Identify priorities and objectives—develop a plan.**
   - List high-priority concerns and needs.
   - Explore possible causes of safety concerns.
   - Identify resources needed and available.
   - Develop possible strategies and actions.
   - Develop evaluation criteria and timelines.
6. **Select and implement activities.**
   - Select strategies and actions for achieving objectives.
   - Include complementary strategies at prevention, intervention and restructuring levels.
   - Set timelines and completion dates.
   - Assign responsibilities.
   - Implement the plan.
   - Monitor progress.
7. **Evaluate the plan.**
   - Determine whether identified problems were solved.
   - Discuss successes/failures of the plan.
   - Determine whether appropriate problems were identified.
   - Discuss how plan can/should be strengthened/revised.
   - With this information, return to step 3.

Source: Thrust for Educational Leadership 24, 2 (October 1994): 21. Reprinted from *Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action*, published by the California Department of Education and attorney general's office.

Multilevel Assessment

A multilevel assessment begins at the district level, examining the question of whether the central office promotes school safety with clear, firm policies and fulfills the functions and provides the services that shore up school safety (Hill and Hill). At the building level, the school's physical, social, and cultural environment, as well as the personal characteristics of students and staff, are assessed. The relationship of the school to the school community should also be examined.

Do these areas reflect what research shows to be characteristic of safe schools? If not, what measures must be taken to address problems in these areas (Lundberg)? Finally, assessment teams must discover whether each classroom is managed in a way that promotes warm relationships within a framework of discipline, order, and psychological as well as physical safety (Aleem, Moles, and others).

Assessment Targets

Tanya Suarez (1992) has summarized the research on the characteristics of safe schools in four areas: students, structure and environment, policies, and involvement of the community. This excellent summary can provide schools with specific targets for assessment. In regard to *students*, safe schools:

- have personnel to support students, staff, and parents. These personnel might be school employees—counselors, psychologists, nurses, and tutors—but may also be community-agency staff, such as law-enforcement officers and social workers.
- offer instruction to all students concerning self-awareness, social relationships and skills, and personal development.
- create and maintain a perception of belonging and commitment to the school.
- recognize students when they succeed in academics, sports, or the interpersonal realm.

In regard to *structure and environment*, safe schools have:

- principals who are strong leaders in creating a positive social environment that envelops all staff and students.
- an administrative structure that is open and flexible rather than closed and rigid.
- cohesiveness among teaching staff and principal.

- a focus on curriculum geared to the academic, cultural, and developmental needs of the students.
- classroom environments emphasizing cooperation, not competition, where students feel safe to take academic risks.
- active involvement of students, staff, and parents in meaningful decision-making.
- high expectations for academic performance and personal behavior.
- adequate supervision in the classroom and elsewhere on the school ground.
- a small number of students, or, when school buildings are large, a division into smaller units such as schools within schools.

Related to *policies*, safe schools provide:

- rules that are firmly enforced and fairly administered, and are well known by staff, students, and parents.
- effective discipline with the participation of all the school staff, the involvement of students in problem-solving, and a focus on remedying the causes of disorder rather than addressing only the symptoms.
- consequences for inappropriate behavior that are used as helpful feedback and learning experiences rather than as short-term punishment.

Finally, related to *community involvement*, safe schools:

- cooperate vigorously with community agencies to provide services and contacts for students.
- actively promote and eagerly accept parent involvement in the school.

Gang Assessment

Districts cannot claim to have completed a comprehensive school-safety assessment until steps have been taken to identify the level of gang development that has occurred in each school community. Almost all communities resist acknowledging that gangs exist within their boundaries. Denial is a significant barrier to assessment and implementation of policies and activities aimed at preventing gang growth (Levine).

Schools did not create the problem of gangs, and they will not be able to solve it alone, or even effectively assess the level of gang development. However, schools can encourage community action by inviting local and state police departments and juvenile-justice representatives and counselors

to join in assessment and prevention as well as intervention activities (Boys and Girls Clubs of America 1993).

In 1993, all Eugene-area school districts joined with other community organizations to create an interagency coordinating committee for a community program to prevent and intervene in gang activities. In addition to school district personnel, members of the following organizations were included on the committee: Lane County District Attorney's Office; Lane County Youth Services Department; Lane County Sheriff's Office; Eugene Department of Public Safety; Springfield Police Department; University of Oregon; Lane Community College; the Eugene, Springfield, and Lane County Human Rights Commissions; area youth agencies; and neighborhood groups. This team is responsible for ongoing assessment as well as prevention and intervention activities (The Eugene-Springfield Community Gang Prevention and Intervention Program 1993).

Chapter 3

Laying the Foundation: Safety by Design

Because the causes of violence are many and often overlap, a broad foundation must be laid to support preventive activities and the positive school climate that deters violent behavior. Without this foundation, preventive efforts can become haphazard and inconsistent, and the best efforts of motivated individuals will likely flounder.

The broadest support for violence prevention naturally comes at the district level. But nested within district guidelines and services are the specific building policies and plans that support staff in creating school safety. Nested within building policies and plans, the structure and management of the classroom provides support for the mutually respectful interactions of students and staff. Each level encompasses and supports the next.

District Responsibilities

Hill and Hill offer a list of functions and services that can foster a positive school climate. These include:

- Selecting the most competent principal
- Enabling school community by creating small groups of students
- Fostering site-based decision-making
- Adopting and supporting consistent discipline policies
- Providing human-resource services
- Providing crisis-response resources
- Encouraging staff development
- Providing for alternative placement

Principal Selection

Research indicates that principals who maintain a high profile during the day, frequently visit classrooms, and develop warm relationships with students and staff are playing an important role in preventing school violence (Stephanie Kadel and Joseph Follman 1993). In addition to taking an active role in promoting school discipline with firm and fair standards, effective principals provide leadership by highlighting instructional goals and priorities (Aleem, Moles, and others). It is the district's responsibility to hire principals who can perform these roles and who have leadership styles that fit the needs of their respective *school communities*. This means not only assessing applicants' competencies, but soliciting input from school personnel and the school's community.

The principal's performance must be continually monitored. More difficult than hiring competent administrators is the task of removing ineffective principals. When districts neglect this responsibility, the negative effects on school climate and staff morale are significant. Other schools are affected when poorly disciplined or poorly educated children pass from elementary school to middle school and finally to high school (Hill and Hill).

There are two major approaches to dealing with an ineffective principal. First, while supporting the principal with mentors and additional training, try moving him or her to a different site, to see if a better match can be obtained. Care must be taken to ensure that this move is not perceived by staff at the new site as indicating that they are not deserving of a quality leader. If reassignment does not result in improved performance, it is the ethical imperative of the district to remove the principal from leadership through reassignment (Hill and Hill).

Fostering Community by Creating Small Groups

Research confirms that smaller schools foster better discipline because they improve relationships among teachers and students (Aleem, Moles, and others). When classrooms are orderly and disciplined, there is much less opportunity for disrespectful behavior or violence.

Hill and Hill note that every strategy for reducing the potential for school violence is compromised when it is applied to large groups of students. Hallways and cafeterias are more congested. Supervision becomes more difficult. Fewer students are known by name. The principal is perceived as more remote. The percentage of students participating in extracurricular activities is reduced.

A number of small facilities are preferable to a single large one. When this is not possible because of existing structures or financial considerations, there are other ways that the size of student groups can be reduced. Schools-

within-schools carve two or more communities out of a larger, less manageable student body. Interdisciplinary teams of teachers may be assigned to work with a limited number of students for an extended time. A more complex possibility for reducing the number of students within the school at any one time is called *multitrack schedules*. By dividing the student body into subgroups and rotating them in and out of the school on a year-round calendar, smaller groups are formed, which are more likely to grow into communities (Hill and Hill).

Fostering Site-Based Decision-Making

Because each school and its surrounding community has unique needs, decisions regarding curriculum, staff development priorities, and budget allocations should be made at the school site whenever practical (Hill and Hill). This increases the likelihood that special needs will be met, while simultaneously empowering and supporting school administrators and staff.

It is important to involve as many staff members as possible in site-based decisions. Research has confirmed repeatedly that schools with disciplined environments actively enlist teacher participation in decision-making. Teachers who have a hand in setting standards that affect their work environment are likely to have higher morale and miss fewer work days. When staff help develop discipline policies, they are more likely to enforce them. This, in turn, reduces disorder and violence. This chain of positive events can only occur, however, if it is initiated and supported at the district level (Aleem, Moles, and others).

Adopting and Supporting Consistent Discipline Policies

Max Janikowski, board development specialist for the Oregon School Boards Association, said, "School districts should have clear, strongly worded policies in place concerning student violence or disorder. This is an important piece of prevention, because it lets students and staff know where they stand before a problem develops." Neither the Oregon School Boards Association nor the National School Boards Association offers guidelines for these policies because policies must be tailored to the special needs of each district. Janikowski consults with districts about constructing policies, and the National School Boards Association disseminates sample policies from districts around the nation.

Eugene Public Schools has adopted a comprehensive set of policies to deter violence on campus. The issues addressed by these policies include:

- obscene language
- willful disobedience

- search and seizure
- sexual harassment
- racial harassment
- theft or destruction of property
- coercion, assault, or threats
- possession, handling, or transport of any weapon
- use or distribution of any controlled substance
- disciplinary and due process procedures
- process of cooperation with law enforcement agencies
  (Eugene Public Schools 1994)

In Eugene Public Schools, expulsion is mandatory for weapon possession or distribution of controlled substances on campus. This zero-tolerance policy is increasingly common in districts around the nation. The Los Angeles Unified School District went one step further—it requires full expulsion of any student who brings a gun onto a Los Angeles school campus. Full expulsion means that the student is not allowed placement even in an alternative school in the district (Dan Isaacs 1994).

Providing Human-Resource Services

Job satisfaction is affected by a number of factors. Districts should provide human-resource services to address issues that have an impact on staff performance, which, in turn, affects student achievement and the general school climate. Hill and Hill suggest that districts invest in a high-quality employee-assistance plan (EAP), thereby making confidential counseling readily accessible to staff for help with personal problems. Small districts with fewer financial resources might form consortiums to provide mental-health services for staff.

An important resource for frustrated or dissatisfied staff is a liberal leave policy. A leave policy that does not require staff to state their reason for requesting leave time can free both staff members and students from an escalating potential for verbal or even physical abuse (Hill and Hill). Some employees will find other work options. Those who return will likely feel refreshed and more convinced that they wish to remain in an educational setting.

Crisis Management

Kadel and Follman advise schools to be prepared for the worst. Deadly violence may erupt within the student body, or there may be a violent intru-

sion by an outsider. Schools that are prepared to handle the kinds of major crises that are featured on national news will also be in a better position to handle local crises such as the death of a student by accident or suicide.

Crisis-management planning should be guided by general district policies. While specific plans must be tailored to each building because of differences in building design, available staff, and student characteristics, Hill and Hill advise districts to establish counseling-assistance teams that are available to all district schools.

Encouraging Professional Development

The continuing professional development of staff is empowering and is bound to improve school climate. Several areas related to the prevention and reduction of violence in the schools are appropriate subjects for inservice training. These include understanding diversity, motivating at-risk students, knowing how to resolve conflicts and manage confrontation, using effective classroom-management methods, and employing counseling techniques (Hill and Hill).

Today's teachers and administrators require special skills to cope with the increasing potential for explosive situations and the growing number of violent students. Yet teachers and administrators are not receiving training in those skills in their university preparation programs. In 1993, the California Education Code was updated to require all California colleges and universities with teacher- and administrator-preparation programs to provide instruction on the principles of school safety by 1996 (H. Woodrow Hughes 1994).

Pepperdine University has designed the School Safety Leadership Curriculum to be used in its graduate school of education and psychology. This model curriculum is organized into five modules: (1) peer aggression and self-esteem, (2) gangs and youth violence, (3) preparing for the unexpected, (4) balancing student rights and responsibilities, and (5) making every campus safe. This curriculum is appropriate not only for initial teacher and administrator preparation; it is also a good model for inservice training to bring practicing professionals up to speed. After completion of field-testing at Pepperdine and in selected public schools, the curriculum will be available through the National School Safety Center at Pepperdine University (Hughes 1994).

Alternative Placement

Each district should develop resources to address the needs of students who have been suspended or expelled, students who have difficulty functioning in the regular education setting because of antisocial behavior. Hill

Walker suggests that alternative placement should be considered when the safety of the student or of the general student body is compromised. "Alternative placements become important not only as a protection for the student body, but as a respite for the student himself or herself," said Walker. "The acting-out student often builds such a reputation with peers and staff that nearly all behavior is interpreted negatively, and the student can feel under siege. But alternative placements should be temporary, and habilitative, not punitive."

David Piercy, assistant to the superintendent of Eugene Public Schools, said, "This district is fortunate to have resources that allow us to maintain most of our acting-out students within the regular school building, in self-contained classrooms. We do have district resources for kids who see some value in education, but can't seem to maintain themselves in our regular program." For these students, the district provides alternative programs such as the Opportunity Center and night school. Some high school students also attend Lane Community College as an alternative to the regular high school program.

The Salem-Keizer (Oregon) School District has a Structured Learning Center where students who are expelled because of antisocial behavior can continue their education. The Structured Learning Center provides an educational setting that meets the special needs of its students while protecting the safety of the general student body. In addition to participating in the usual academic pursuits, students meet in small groups to work on social skills and anger management.

Walker recommends maintaining students in the regular education setting as long as possible. Prevention and intervention that begin no later than kindergarten can often eliminate the need for eventual alternative placement for students who display early signs of antisocial tendencies. "It is in the school that we can most successfully affect two of the three most influential factors in a student's life—peers and teachers," said Walker. He has developed and implemented First Steps, a model program in the Eugene Public Schools that teaches identified children prosocial behaviors. His program incorporates work with peers, teachers, and with the third major influence factor—the child's family. This program is described in chapter 4.

Sometimes students create their own alternative placement—the streets. Ninety percent of daytime crime is committed by truant youth (Hill Walker 1994). "It is important to get these youth back into a program where they can have contact with adults who care about them, and can help them reconnect to society," Piercy said. "Our district has a purpose, not yet a plan, to create a school for youth who are currently 'hanging out' on the Eugene downtown mall." He notes that academic offerings would be a component of the school, but that the main focus would be on social habilitation—recruiting youth back into mainstream culture.

As districts of all sizes come to grips with the growing threat to school safety posed by gang activity, the task of creating an educational setting that provides youth with purpose and belonging as well as instruction looms large. While some districts have the resources to provide alternative placements at every age level, smaller districts often struggle to find appropriate placements for students not able to remain in regular education settings.

Leon Furhman, home-school/alternative-education specialist at the Oregon Department of Education, notes that many smaller districts form consortiums and pool resources to create access to alternative placement. "But we don't have a good answer in terms of alternative placement in small districts for those younger children who seem beyond the reach of prevention and are a significant source of disruption and low-level violence," said Fuhrman.

Fuhrman suggests that schools try to prevent children who regularly act out from forming relationships with one another. Intensive efforts to help these students connect with at least one adult in the school setting might keep them from pursuing a delinquent path. Districts should provide the necessary resources to those buildings that document a greater number of acting-out children.

Building Design

When new school buildings are planned, or when existing structures are remodeled or augmented, the district should bring together architects, educators, and security experts to design the safest and most appealing buildings possible. One superintendent recommends using a wheel design, with the main office at the hub and hallways forming the spokes. Schools should be located in the midst of businesses and homes, with all entrances and administrative offices visible from bordering streets (National School Safety Council 1990). Other suggested features include the following:

- windows with laminated plastic sheets between the panes to prevent shattering
- landscaping that does not provide hiding places for intruders or students
- steep roofs to prevent climbing
- windows on all classroom and office doors to help prevent molestation
- heavy-duty construction materials such as concrete block instead of drywall (Sandra Sabo 1993)

School buildings that reflect the pride of the community and that feel more like a workshop or activity center than an institution promote a positive school climate. This in turn helps prevent the development of a student

culture prone to incivility or violence (Hill and Hill). The challenge is to design a building that is less likely to be a target of intrusive violence but that is not unappealing or fortress-like.

Responsibilities at the Building Level

When the district has broad support for creating safe schools, it becomes the job of the principal and site-management team to take up this multifaceted task at the building level. Building decisions must be made and actions taken that implement district policies in light of the school's characteristics and that make optimal use of the services provided by the district.

As noted earlier, the principal plays a pivotal role in promoting school safety. In addition to being highly visible in classrooms and hallways, and nurturing warm relationships with students and staff, the principal must take the lead in diffusing power throughout the staffing structure. However, as the leader of the site-management team, the principal must ensure that building-level responsibilities for establishing school safety are addressed.

Educating the School Community About Policies

District policies can only be effective if staff, students, and parents are familiar with them. David Piercy notes that many schools in his district hold assemblies for all incoming freshmen to familiarize them with district policies governing student behavior. Some districts conduct similar orientations in homerooms or in required classes, such as English.

Schoolwide Discipline

A schoolwide discipline policy that fleshes out district policy must be developed and implemented consistently across the student body. In their book *Antisocial Behavior in Schools: Strategies and Best Practices*, Hill Walker, Geoff Colvin, and Elizabeth Ramsey (1995) suggest a detailed five-phase procedure, reviewed here in brief.

1. *Formulate a basic direction for establishing expected behavior and managing problem behavior.* Direction is provided by a school mission statement, designed to capture the values of staff and students, and by a purpose statement. An example of a purpose statement might be: To establish schoolwide structures that facilitate teaching and learning, to encourage student behaviors that enhance the learning environment, and to minimize student behaviors that inhibit teaching and learning.

2. *Specify schoolwide expected behaviors.* These include four or five general expectations, as well as expectations for specific settings, such as the

cafeteria or playground. Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey offer this possible list of general behavioral expectations:

- Provide a safe and supportive environment for learning.
- Cooperate with others.
- Manage oneself.
- Respect the rights and property of others.

3. *Develop procedures for teaching schoolwide behavioral expectations.* First, implement schoolwide positive structures to acknowledge students who demonstrate expected behaviors. Second, teach the expected behaviors with informal reminders, good supervision, and feedback about student performance of the behaviors. Finally, teach the behaviors through formal classroom instruction that includes role plays and simulations, then encourage expected behaviors through precorrections and reinforce student performance.

4. *Develop procedures for correcting problem behavior.* This entails first categorizing inappropriate behavior as either a minor or serious infraction, or as illegal. The school should have consistent procedures for dealing with behavior in any of the categories.

5. *Develop procedures for record keeping, evaluation, and dissemination.* Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey suggest these components for recordkeeping and evaluation:

- checklist to measure whether the various steps in the plan have been identified, defined, and implemented
- strategies and forms for keeping continuing records of both expected and inappropriate student behavior
- decision rules for reviewing and revising the plan
- screening system for identifying students who are at risk
- procedures and routines for collecting and processing data

Details of the discipline plan should be disseminated to all stakeholders—administrators, staff, substitute teachers, school board members, students, and parents. Once implemented, the schoolwide discipline plan will be the foundation that supports all other violence-prevention activities.

Selecting and Targeting Violence-Prevention Activities

Violence-prevention activities must put time, energy, and money where they are most needed. Some activities, such as schoolwide formal and informal instruction in generally expected behaviors, should be found in all schools. After engaging in an assessment process, the school-safety commit-

tee or site-management team should be able to identify building-specific targets for prevention activities. The characteristics of targeted groups, such as age, developmental level, cultural background, social-skill deficits and strengths, and associated risk factors, must determine the choice of violence-prevention activities (Fenley 1993). Programs that have been written about in educational literature or that have been effective in other communities with similar target groups can be tried. Some of these activities are reviewed in chapters 4 and 5.

J. Larson (1994) has outlined a three-level approach to guide violence-prevention activities in the school. *Primary prevention* is aimed at the general student body. Activities include developing awareness; teaching social competence, rule-governed behavior, and personally responsible decision-making; facilitating academic performance; and developing self-esteem.

Secondary prevention is directed toward at-risk students. This level includes activities such as proactive screening of all students to identify at-risk youth and families; direct instruction in generic social skills, conflict-resolution strategies, peer-mediation processes, empathy, and moral reasoning; anger-management training; and family support and parent training.

Tertiary prevention targets juvenile offenders and severely antisocial or delinquent youth. Activities at this level include connecting students and their caregivers to social-service agencies; coordinating with law enforcement, courts, and corrections; providing drug counseling; using alternative placements such as day-treatment centers, alternative schools, or residential environments; planning for transition from school to work and adult living; and offering instruction in key life skills, vocational skills, and social-competence levels required for employment.

Staff Supervision and Development

Curcio and First note that an important but often ignored—or unacknowledged—source of violence in schools is the verbal, physical, or emotional abuse of students by staff. The detrimental effects extend beyond the individual students the abusive behavior is directed toward. Children who witness inappropriate or out-of-control behavior by an adult authority figure who is supposed to model desired behavior are also adversely affected, and the general school atmosphere of safety is polluted.

While principals should allow teachers reasonable autonomy in fulfilling their duties, they must also be alert to shortcomings that are detrimental to school climate. Clear guidance must be given to staff members who do not practice constructive, positive discipline strategies. Teachers who lack classroom-management skills should be encouraged or required to attend workshops or to engage in mentored relationships with skilled teachers.

Classified staff must also be trained in the positive management of students (Curcio and First).

Time To Plan as a Team

Teachers who do not have adequate academic planning time cannot be expected to concentrate on academic activities that research shows can reduce disorder and lower the probability of violent eruptions (Aleem, Moles, and others). Teachers planning in isolation at home or during scattered prep times—for example, while students are at P.E.—will not be able to accomplish the team effort needed to maintain high teacher morale and keep students focused on learning, wherever in the building they may be.

At Fairplay Elementary in Corvallis, Oregon, teams of teachers involve their students for a four-hour block of time in "MAGIC" (Music, Art, Gym, and Interesting Challenges). During this time, the teachers, working as a team, develop a coordinated instructional plan and strategies to deal with problem behaviors as they arise.

Maintaining High Academic Expectations of All Students

An emphasis on the academic mission of the school and high performance standards helps students remain engaged with their work and lessens the likelihood of disruptive activity. In schools with academic tracking and ability grouping, teachers have lower expectations for student success in low-ability groups. These students are more likely to misbehave when tracked, and grouping them may lead to a situation in which antisocial values are shaped by negative peer pressure. Middle schools and high schools that downplay tracking and ability grouping seem to have fewer discipline problems (Aleem, Moles, and others).

Creating Community

With the support of the district office, each building must examine the community potential that exists, given the size and grouping of the student body. Groups must be created that are small enough to promote the growth of community feeling. At Oaklea Middle School in Junction City, Oregon, the student body is divided into "rivers." This division into smaller school communities gives students consistent contact with the same set of caring adults as they "flow" from fifth to eighth grade. When creating groups that are intended to be inclusive and to encourage positive values, care must be taken to meet the special needs of students who are particularly at risk for alienation from peers and adults at school (Larry Brendtro and Steven Van Bockern 1994).

At Fairplay Elementary School in Corvallis, all staff members from custodian to principal, are assigned a K-5 mixed-age group of ten to twelve students. The entire student body meets weekly in these "neighborhood groups" with their adult mentors to discuss issues that affect their lives. "This ensures that every single child feels he or she is well known and connected to the school," said Vicki Cochran, counselor at Fairplay. The mentors have received training in using a common language to help children learn expected behaviors, so that each neighborhood group also feels a common bond with the larger school community.

Building Care and Security

"When I see a campus that's filthy, dark, and in need of repairs, I know it's not a safe school," said George Butterfield of the National School Safety Center. Butterfield noted a strong correlation between cleanliness and safety (Sabo). The condition of the school building has important effects on school climate, and the school climate, in turn, determines in part how the building is treated by students.

At Hampton High School, a small school in rural Tennessee with a dismal reputation in the community, poor attendance, and high dropout rates, a new principal involved students in improving the appearance of the school, inside and out. Sponsoring clubs were given a small fund to use for the paint, decorations, or landscape plants they selected for their chosen area. The school climate improved so dramatically that the principal received a state award as an outstanding high school principal (Hill and Hill).

To prevent the intrusion of violence from the community into the school, Robert Rubel and Peter Blauvelt (1994) suggest that a school-safety committee ask a number of questions, such as How many entrances does your building have? Are trees and shrubs planted close to the building where they might offer cover to intruders or block the view of the school from the street? Are parking lots well lighted at night and in the early morning? Are portable classrooms near the school or off by themselves?

Access to the building should be restricted and monitored. Post a sign at the school entrance directing all visitors to report to the office. Distribute visitors' passes. Make sure that all open doors are monitored by adults. Train all school personnel to gently challenge any person in the halls or on the school grounds who is unknown to them, and who does not have a visitor's pass. Secondary school building doors can be fitted with electromagnetic locks set to open when a fire alarm is triggered (George Gerl 1991).

A controversial method of preventing students or community members from bringing weapons into the school is the use of metal detectors. School districts in 20 percent of the 700 communities surveyed in 1994 by the

National League of Cities reported using metal detectors to deter students from carrying weapons (Arndt). The National School Boards Association reports that 36 percent of school districts nationwide employ security personnel or have cooperative programs with local police agencies to bring armed officers onto campus.

Security personnel and metal-detection systems are expensive, and both have drawbacks. If armed, security staff may increase tensions and send an unintended message to students about the utility and wisdom of carrying weapons. Metal detectors may give students the feeling they are being treated like criminals. And students can circumvent them by passing weapons through a school window. Schools housed in several buildings connected by outdoor walkways will find metal detectors impractical (Kadel and Follman).

Supervision

Adequate supervision is vital both to prevent violent intrusion from the community and to deny students the opportunity to commit or get away with antisocial or violent acts. Gerl suggests that supervision of middle and high school students when they are outside the school building is as important as supervision of elementary students during recess.

Research indicates that school discipline and climate benefit when teachers assume responsibility for supervising areas of the building other than their own classroom (Aleem, Moles, and others). Some districts enlist the help of parents or other volunteers to monitor entrances, hallways, or bathrooms. These volunteers are trained to intervene in fights and to defuse violent situations (Kadel and Follman).

Some schools involve students in the supervision effort. At W. R. Thomas Middle School in Miami, Florida, thirty to fifty students known as "Tiger Patrols" are stationed in groups of two or three around the school grounds in the morning to discourage vandalism. Tiger Patrols also monitor the halls during class changes. They assist students and report disruptive incidents (Kadel and Follman).

Gangs

Preventing gang growth must be a community effort. However, specific steps can be taken at the school level to create a safe haven from gang activity. Robert Cantrell and Mary Lynn Cantrell (1993) suggest that schools take the following steps:

- Establish dress and discipline codes. Dress codes should ban gang identifiers.
- Prohibit and report to the police all gang recruiting activities.

- Impound beepers and headphones.
- Develop clear policies on assault and weapons possession, and make sure that all students are aware of them.
- Report assault and weapons offenses to the police.
- Immediately remove gang graffiti from school grounds.

Some youth gang experts suggest that the response to gangs should be assertive and decisive, but tempered with caution. The Oregon Crime Prevention Resource Center (Levine) offers these caveats:

Labeling. Labeling of any kind can be extremely dangerous to a child's well-being, having a serious negative impact on self-esteem, relationships with parents, children, and teachers, and academic achievement.

Clothing. Attempts to restrict clothing styles often fall unjustly and inappropriately on young men and women of color.

Keep students in school. A primary goal of antigang activities is to keep students in school. Sanctions that have the effect of pushing young people out of school will ultimately injure that child's chances of success. However, removal of a child from a regular school setting may be necessary for the protection of others.

Gang membership. Gang membership is not confined to any single place, race, ethnic group, or economic stratum.

Paul Garcia (1994), vice principal at Roosevelt High School in Fresno, California, believes that by characterizing youth gangs as the most serious threat to school safety, schools may be contributing to youth gang proliferation and increasing alienation among marginalized students. If gangs are made to be the scapegoat, schools probably will not frame school safety within the wider context of overcrowded classrooms, school segregation, student poverty, and racial tension, or develop a comprehensive approach to creating a safe environment by ameliorating the tangled web of causative factors.

A broad-based preventive effort should reduce all forms of violent behavior while simultaneously reducing the risk of youth involvement in gangs. Still, to heighten awareness of the dangers of gang affiliation, there must be student- and parent-education activities that deal specifically with gangs. When a number of gang members exist in the student body, intervention with that target population becomes necessary to prevent the proliferation of gang affiliation (Kenneth Viegas 1994).

Crisis Management

Chester Quarles (1993) advises each building to form a Crisis Action Team consisting of the principal, counselor(s), teachers, school nurse, and

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Violence in Schools

by Dean Walker

School is the place where,
When you have to go there,
They have to let you in.

With a little alteration, Robert Frost's famous line from his poem *The Death of the Hired Man* sums up the double edge of compulsory school attendance with regard to the problem of school violence. It helps us recognize the moral imperative to create emotional and physical safety in the environment where children are required to spend a major portion of their childhoods. It also elucidates why it is difficult to accomplish the task of turning schools into islands of peace in an ocean of violence.

The Violence Explosion: Causes and Consequences

It is inevitable that the violence that permeates American society is carried into schools by a portion of the students who attend. The causes of violence in the schools are inseparable from the roots of violence in the society in which schools are embedded.

The Oregon School Study Council—an organization of member school districts in the state—is a service of the College of Education, University of Oregon.

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Poverty. Twenty percent of children live in poverty; among children under the age of six, the figure is 25 percent. As basic services to low-income families have been drastically reduced in the last decade with cuts in federal funding, there has been a concomitant increase in violence in homes, schools, and communities (National Association for the Education of Young Children 1993).

Exposure to Violence in Society and the Media. The United States is the most violent country in the industrialized world, leading the world in homicides, rapes, and assaults (Dodd 1993). Viewing television violence has been significantly correlated with aggressive behavior in children as young as six (Eron 1980).

Domestic Violence. In a study of violent delinquents, 75 percent reported they had been brutally physically abused as children. Eighty percent of those who batter women were either abused as children or witnessed abuse in their homes (National School Safety Center 1990).

Easy Access to Guns and Other Weapons. A 1993 Louis Harris poll found that 59 percent of the nation's sixth- through twelfth-graders say they can get a handgun if they want one, usually from home (Wilson and Zirkel 1994).

Ethnic or Racial Conflict. In 1989, a survey revealed that hate crimes or incidents reflecting racial hatred occurred in one-third of Los Angeles public schools (Schmidt 1989).

Gangs. Violence is a way of life for gang members. It is often required for initiation into membership and is the method of choice for resolving conflict (Natale 1994).

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Blueprint for a Safe Haven: Assessment

According to Renee Wilson-Brewer, former director of the National Network of Violence Prevention Practitioners, "If you're going to do violence prevention the right way, it would make sense to really understand the school system—the student population, the faculty population . . . the kinds of violence that have occurred, the community, and its social organization and lack of organization" (Lawton).

A multilevel assessment begins at the district level, examining whether the central office promotes school safety with clear, firm policies, and by fulfilling the functions and providing the services that shore up school safety (Hill and Hill 1994). At the building level, the school's physical, social, and cultural environment, as well as the personal characteristics of students and staff, must be assessed. The relationship of the school to the school community must also be examined, including the level of development of gang activity (Lundberg 1994, Levine 1992). Finally, assessment teams must discover whether each classroom promotes warm relationships within a framework of discipline, order, and psychological as well as physical safety (Aleem, Moles, and others 1993).

Laying the Foundation: Safety by Design

Because the causes of violence are many and often overlap, a broad foundation must be laid to support preventive activities and a positive school climate that deters violent behavior.

District Responsibilities

Hill and Hill offer a list of functions and services that the district can provide to foster a positive school climate. These include:

- Selecting the most competent principal
- Enabling school community by creating small groups of students
- Fostering site-based decision-making
- Adopting and supporting consistent discipline policies
- Providing human-resource services
- Providing crisis-response resources
- Encouraging staff development
- Providing for alternative placement

Responsibilities at the Building Level

The condition of the school building itself must be addressed, as this affects school climate; the school climate, in turn, affects how the building is treated by students. George Butterfield of the National School Safety Center notes a strong correlation between cleanliness and safety (Sabo 1993).

A schoolwide discipline policy that fleshes out district policy must be developed and applied consistently across the student body. In their book *Antisocial Behavior in Schools: Strategies and Best Practices*, Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey (1995) suggest a detailed five-phase procedure for creating a schoolwide discipline plan.

Larson (1994) has outlined a three-level approach to guide violence-prevention activities in the school. *Primary prevention* is aimed at the general student body. Activities include developing awareness; teaching social competence, rule-governed behavior, and personally responsible decision-making; facilitating academic performance; and developing self-esteem.

Secondary prevention is directed toward at-risk students and includes activities such as proactive screening of all students to identify at-risk youth and families; direct instruction in generic social skills, conflict-resolution strategies, peer-mediation processes, empathy, and moral reasoning; anger-management training; and family support and parent training.

Tertiary prevention targets juvenile offenders and severely antisocial or delinquent youth. Intervention activities include connecting students and their caregivers to social-service agencies; coordinating with law enforcement, courts, and corrections; providing drug counseling; using alternative placements such as day-treatment centers, alternative schools, or residential environments; planning for transition from school to work and adult living; and offering instruction in key life skills.

Building Blocks: Violence-Prevention Programs

Schools that are violence-free are not just

characterized by the absence of violence. They are also effective, caring, nurturing, inclusive, achieving, and accepting (Suarez 1992, Walker 1994). Any school activity that increases these characteristics promotes the goal of violence prevention.

Counseling Programs

The best counseling programs are grounded in a schoolwide discipline plan. Counselors, administrators, or a school-climate committee can organize schoolwide activities that teach generally expected behaviors. Both assemblies and classroom sessions led by teachers or counselors offer students opportunities to see appropriate behavior modeled, to practice them, and to be reinforced for exhibiting the behaviors. Individual and group counseling can be provided for students who need more focused attention.

Intensive Primary Prevention

"We've got to reach children who are at risk for full-blown delinquent behavior way before the age of eight," said Hill Walker. "We can identify kids who are developing antisocial patterns of behavior by the age of three. Research shows that early intervention with these children has long-lasting effects." Walker has developed a program called First Steps, designed to systematically teach prosocial behavior (Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey).

Violence-Prevention Curriculum

There are more than three hundred violence-prevention curricula for middle and high school students, according to the National Network of Violence Prevention Practitioners (Lawton). But only two have been formally evaluated because of the costs involved and because people are more focused on doing something about the problem of violence than on formally evaluating efforts. "If it makes a difference in my school, and I have a reduction of 10% in some problem, those materials are O.K. by me, and I don't need researchers to say that it works," said Gwendolyn Cooke, director of urban services at the National Association of Secondary School Principals (Lawton).

Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation

There are more than 100 conflict-resolution curricula for middle and high school students. One of the most widely used and highly regarded is the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, which began in 1985 and is used in 150 schools (Lawton). In addition to curricula, the National Association for Mediation in Education estimates that several hundred peer conflict-mediation programs are operating in U.S. schools (M. Van Slyck 1991).

A Curriculum to Prevent Domestic Violence

In 1991, The Domestic Violence Review, commissioned by Manitoba Justice in Canada, recommended that Manitoba schools integrate a component on domestic violence into the curriculum. The result was a curriculum that teaches children in grades 5 to 8 how to productively handle conflict and anger, to recognize warning signs exhibited by those who are prone to violence, and to develop their personal values and attitudes toward coercion (Manitoba Department of Education 1993).

Beyond the School Walls: Community Involvement

Violence prevention requires schools and communities to act in concert to prevent the isolation and alienation of children from society.

Community involvement in parent education has become increasingly common in schools. For the past five years, for example, Laurel Elementary School in Junction City has offered all district parents free parent-education classes and special seminars in conjunction with Lane Community College.

To increase the accessibility of therapy and social-work services, many professionals are setting up shop in the school. Community agencies often provide counseling and other forms of aid and consult with each other about providing comprehensive services to children and families in the school.

Students Connect with Their Community

To complete the circle that protects children from the risk factors of isolation and alienation, schools must cultivate options for students to extend their learning opportunities into career or public-service settings.

Community service and Cooperative Work Experience (CWE) are two ways for youth to make connections with the larger community.

Conclusion

No child escapes the damage of going to school in an atmosphere of fear, surrounded by a peer culture steeped in violence. It's unproductive to spend time assigning blame. For many children, if the prevention of violent behavior doesn't happen at school, it just isn't going to happen.

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maintenance and transportation personnel, as well as representatives from local police and emergency services. This team should be responsible for developing all aspects of a crisis-management plan, including assigning specific emergency-related tasks to particular personnel and clearly outlining the process for communication within the school, with parents, and with the media.

Many excellent resources are available to guide the development of crisis-management plans. Kadel and Follman offer a guide for crisis management and response that includes five elements: (1) creating a plan; (2) communicating with school staff, parents, and the media; (3) aiding the recovery process of victims; (4) using alternative discipline strategies when the crisis is precipitated by a student or students; and (5) reporting violent incidents.

Gaustad notes that schools may seek advice from local security experts or police. She also recommends The NSSC Resource Paper *School Crisis Prevention and Response* (Suzanne Harper 1989) as an excellent planning resource.

Responsibilities in the Classroom

The Goal 6 Workgroup, chaired by Diane Aleem and Oliver Moles, was established to review research that might help schools attain goal 6 of the National Education Goals (Aleem, Moles, and others). This committee report included information on the role of classroom management and organization in preventing disorder and disruption. The authors note that disorder is a breeding ground for disrespectful interactions among students and teachers and ultimately may foster, or at least provide the opportunity for, violent behavior. Most research about classroom management has been done at the elementary level. Still, the work of the Goal 6 Workgroup provides a general guide to the responsibilities of the classroom teacher.

Establishing and Maintaining Order

Order does not necessarily imply silent or motionless students. It suggests cooperation between students and teachers in a program of instruction that does not necessarily prohibit discussion or conversation, movement, and noise. Successful classroom managers discuss rules at the beginning of the year, or whenever an activity begins that requires a new routine. Much of the teacher's success is dependent on monitoring three dimensions of classroom functioning:

- Teachers watch groups, remaining aware of the entire room and how well the total activity is going.

- Teachers watch conduct or behavior, paying particular attention to students' deviations from the intended program of action in order to stop them early.
- Teachers monitor the pace, rhythm, and duration of classroom events. (Aleem, Moles, and others)

Classroom Arrangements and Teaching Styles

The more loosely structured the setting, and the greater the amount of student activity, choice, and mobility, the greater the need for overt management and control by the teacher. When student involvement is high, such as in teacher-led small groups, misbehavior is rare. When student participation is lowest, for example, during a presentation by another student, misbehavior becomes common. Teachers need to recognize these patterns and plan activities that meet the needs of particular time periods. For example, when students are coming from an unstructured activity such as lunch, a highly structured activity is advisable to calm them and channel their energy directly into some academic pursuit.

Highly structured forms of cooperative learning have been shown to increase student achievement if both group and individual goals are incorporated. Poorly designed group activities, however, can shift student focus from content to procedural matters, where conflict may be more likely to arise.

Curriculum

When academic work is routine and familiar, like regular worksheet exercises, the classroom usually functions smoothly. As more difficult or complex tasks are assigned—for example, when students are required to make interpretations and decisions to accomplish tasks—activity flow often becomes slow and uneven. The tension between the need for classroom order and the need for students to engage in exploration, problem-solving, and other meaningful educational tasks lies at the heart of one of the most important dilemmas facing educators. Teachers must embed education in a meaningful context and become skilled in balancing order and freedom in their classrooms. As student characteristics change from class to class, teachers must be prepared to change their approach to meet particular discipline needs.

Most educators are aware that teacher expectations affect student achievement. Teachers must not only hold high expectations for students, but also take appropriate steps to help students meet expectations. When students find success, their perceptions of their school and of themselves usually become more positive, and the behavior that flows from these perceptions contributes to a productive classroom atmosphere and a positive school climate.

Dealing with Misbehavior

Misbehavior is often very contagious, because students who engage in it are rewarded by peer attention. Teachers must intervene quickly and effectively to quell disruptive behavior, if possible without drawing undue attention to the perpetrator.

Teachers should initially respond unobtrusively to misbehavior, through gestures, eye contact, or proximity. Verbal reprimands, when necessary, should be limited to one calm word, such as "shh," or "stop." Intervention should occur at the onset of misbehavior.

Behavior-modification techniques are effective in many situations in which individual students need strong interventions to guide behavior. These techniques are often time and labor intensive, however, and may prove impractical in many classrooms. In addition, evidence suggests that reliance on reinforcement for appropriate behaviors can damage students' inherent motivation to do well.

Finally, all infractions should be handled in a manner consistent with the specifications of the schoolwide discipline plan. In the safest schools, teachers have a hand in developing this plan, and, therefore, they are more motivated to consistently enforce it. Consistency and fairness in application of discipline is an important ingredient in safe schools (Aleem, Moles, and others; Kadel and Follman).

The responsibility for recognizing and remedying personal and professional skill deficits that affect classroom management lies first with the teacher. With the support of colleagues, administrators, and specialists, th teacher can develop the skills necessary to provide the framework of emotional and physical safety that allows students to thrive in a peaceful atmosphere.

Chapter 4

Building Blocks: Violence-Prevention Programs

What do the following have in common?

- A curriculum developed to teach children to resolve conflict peacefully
- A free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch program
- Keeping pregnant teens in school by providing support, training, and free child care
- Teaching boys and girls, blacks, whites, and Hispanics mutual respect

All are violence-prevention programs. Schools that are violence-free are not just characterized by the absence of violence. They are also effective, caring, nurturing, inclusive, achieving, and accepting (Suarez; Walker). Any school activity that increases these characteristics promotes the goal of violence prevention. This chapter reviews a few of the programs that schools can consider offering to their students.

Counseling Programs

The best counseling programs are grounded in a schoolwide discipline plan (see chapter 3). Counselors, administrators, or a school-climate committee can organize schoolwide activities that teach generally expected behaviors. Both assemblies and classroom sessions led by teachers or counselors offer students opportunities to see appropriate behaviors modeled, to practice them, and to be reinforced for exhibiting the behaviors.

"No matter how wonderful an individual counselor is, a single person cannot have the kind of impact on children that is necessary to teach them

that caring counts and to teach the social skills that express caring," said Vicki Cochran, an elementary school counselor in the Corvallis School District. Cochran, who in 1992-93 worked on school reform for the Oregon Department of Education as a Distinguished Oregon Educator, reminds school staff that "constant repetition and reinforcement of skills and expected behavior is a must. We don't teach kids multiplication one day, and say, 'Well, there you go, that's how you do times.' But we assume when it comes to behavior that we only have to tell children something once, and they should have it down." Whatever form the counseling program takes, all staff members should pull together to support it.

The All-School Assembly

At Lincoln and Fairplay Elementary schools, Cochran assists in producing assemblies every two weeks that teach expected behaviors and that help children develop a number of skills, from problem-solving to respectful assertiveness. The music teacher is involved in staging the Lincoln assemblies. "We use music, movement, and fun to get kids hooked into learning," said Cochran. "Then we teach them a common language about caring, about school pride, about interpersonal relationships." All staff members are present at assemblies, and many participate in the singing and dancing, and in skits which are used to teach students concepts and skills. Staff members use this same language of concepts and rubric of skills in dealing with children on a daily basis.

"The assemblies do a lot more than just provide skill instruction," said Cochran. "When the kids see the adults having fun, relating to one another and the students in a very positive way, it lets them know they're in a safe place. It creates an emotionally nurturing atmosphere."

School assemblies can also be used to honor positive student behaviors. Many high schools have a schoolwide system of recognition and rewards for sports activities. Excellence in sports should be recognized as a positive achievement, but the spotlight can be broadened to include recognition for exemplary leadership, excellent citizenship, academic achievement, and participation in any activity that promotes school and community pride (Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey).

Classroom Guidance Sessions

At Rose Elementary School in Roseburg, counselor Franklin Pratt offers weekly classroom presentations to teach all children social skills. "We're the so-called 'inner-city' school in Roseburg," said Pratt. "Seventy percent of our kids are on the free and reduced-price lunch program. We surveyed the kids and found that in 1993, 34 percent of the students did not

feel respected by their peers." In his classroom sessions, Pratt teaches the children to use a system of self-management called "Stop, Think, and Plan." The system allows children to plan how to handle problem situations, to consider consequences, and to pursue peaceful alternatives. All other staff, including the principal, use a common language with children when handling discipline episodes.

At Laurel Elementary in Junction City, Child Development Specialist Hershel Olmstead provides classroom sessions for teachers who have identified specific issues that are having an impact on the classroom atmosphere. The teachers consult with Olmstead to determine what actions to take to reinforce the lessons he presents. "It's true that there are skills or problems that are common to almost all classrooms," said Olmstead, "but the issues can vary amazingly from room to room. A generic presentation might prove useful in one room, but inappropriate in another. And when teachers have identified the hot issue and requested a counselor-led session, it's much more likely they will follow through with reinforcement."

Small-Group and Individual Counseling

At Rose Elementary, Pratt said 2-4 percent of the students consume 40 percent of the discipline time. In many schools, these children are candidates for small-group sessions that focus on specific skills such as anger management, social skills, problem-solving techniques, and conflict-resolution skills. Some groups are issue oriented, dealing with drug and alcohol abuse, divorce, or sexual abuse.

Students with very high needs may require one-on-one attention from a counselor in addition to involvement in a group. School counselors can perform this function, and, increasingly, schools are contracting with counseling agencies to provide individual and family counseling at the school. At Laurel Elementary and Oaklea Middle School, in the Junction City School District, counseling is provided by a child and family therapist from the community-intervention program of The Child Center, a private, nonprofit mental-health treatment facility. The schools provide the rooms and the therapy is paid for by Title XIX, insurance, and scholarships funded by grants.

Intensive Primary Prevention

"We've got to reach children who are at risk for full-blown delinquent behavior way before the age of eight," said Hill Walker. "We can identify kids who are developing antisocial patterns of behavior by the age of three. Research shows that early intervention with these children has long-lasting

effects." Walker has developed a program called First Steps, designed to systematically provide early intervention; he is piloting the program in the Eugene Public Schools with money from a four-year grant from the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs. The program is described in detail in *Antisocial Behavior in School: Strategies and Best Practices* (1995), which Walker coauthored with Geoff Colvin and Elizabeth Ramsey.

First Steps begins by casting a broad net. All kindergarten students are screened for antisocial behavior at the beginning of the school year. Children selected for the program are influenced through three program components. "Home Base" teaches parents in home sessions how to help their child get off to a good start in school in three target areas: getting along with teachers, getting along with peers, and doing school work. The classroom component, called *Class* (Contingencies for Learning Academic and Social Skills), requires thirty days to implement. It consists of intensive behavior-management techniques applied to the student's behavior for two daily thirty-minute periods. The third component is an attempt to match the family needs with available community-support services.

"We worked with twenty-four kids in 1993-94, and it appears they're all doing great," said Walker. Observations and ratings by teachers and parents show the improvement. Parents seemed particularly to appreciate the Home Base sessions, in which the focus is not on "parent education," but on helping parents train their children. While the result is the same, this focus and the use of positive terminology make the sessions seem child-focused and less threatening to the parents.

Two years ago, Whiteaker Elementary School in Eugene instituted its own intensive prevention effort in its kindergarten classrooms. One full-time therapist from Looking Glass, a private, nonprofit agency; two Looking Glass socialization specialists; one teacher; and one teacher assistant work together to teach students social skills and anger management. Nancy English, community outreach coordinator at Whiteaker, said, "The difference this has made in the way our first- and second-graders behave this year is just phenomenal."

Violence-Prevention Curriculum

There are more than three hundred violence-prevention curricula for middle and high school students, according to the National Network of Violence Prevention Practitioners (Lawton). Only two of them have been formally evaluated. One reason is that evaluation is expensive. Also, people are more focused on doing something about the problem of violence than on formally evaluating those efforts. "If it makes a difference in my school, and I have a reduction of 10% in some problem, those materials are O.K. by me,

and I don't need researchers to say that it works," said Gwendolyn Cooke, director of urban services at the National Association of Secondary School Principals (Lawton).

Stu Cohen, director of the Center for Violence Prevention and Control at the nonprofit Education Development Center in Newton, Massachusetts, said, "No one who's working in the field seriously thinks that a curriculum alone is really the answer to violence prevention. Curricula need to be part of a much broader effort at violence prevention. But they can play a very important role" (Lawton).

In September 1993, the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funded evaluations of fifteen violence-prevention projects, but the results of the studies will not be available until 1996 or later (Lawton). Until then, decisions about prevention activities will have to be based on the apparent content validity of the curriculum.

Only two of the three hundred violence-prevention curriculua are described in this section. Most of these curricula overlap considerably in the skills they teach, even when the target group is very different. Most teach self- and other-awareness, communication skills, problem-solving, anger management, and impulse control. The Second Step violence-prevention curriculum has been used in Portland schools. Straight Talk About Risks (STAR) specifically targets gun violence.

For more detailed descriptions of fifty-one violence-prevention programs, see Renee Wilson-Brewer, *Violence Prevention for Young Adolescents: A Survey of the State of the Art* (1991).

Second Step: A Violence-Prevention Curriculum

The Second Step curriculum is designed to reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior in children from preschool to grade 8. Lessons in the curriculum are based on research that has defined the skill deficits that put children at risk for violent behavior. These deficits include a lack of empathy, impulse control, problem-solving and anger-management skills, and assertiveness. The curriculum was piloted in the Seattle School District, where results indicated that these skills were significantly enhanced in participating students.

The developers of the curriculum believe that children learn to act prosocially in the same ways they learn to act antisocially—through modeling, practice, and reinforcement. The lessons use these techniques to teach children the skills to implement prosocial behavior. All children benefit from this instruction, both directly and indirectly, in the form of an improved school climate.

Because empathic people tend to understand the points of view of other people, they are less likely to misunderstand and become angry at peers. They also are less likely to hurt others, because of their distress response to pain in other people. Second Step developers cite research that even very young children can be taught empathy skills and impulse control. The curriculum teaches problem-solving in social situations to keep children from "leaping before they look." It also teaches specific target behaviors such as "apologizing" or "joining in" an activity. Continual reinforcement by school staff helps students generalize new behaviors, which gradually replace antisocial behavior.

Straight Talk About Risks (STAR)

The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, chaired by Sarah Brady, has developed the STAR curriculum to teach prekindergarten through twelfth-grade students ways of reducing their risk of becoming victims of gun violence. Students rehearse behaviors such as resisting peer pressure and recognizing and channeling anger nonviolently. Using videos to show teenagers the consequences to the mental and physical health of those who have been wounded by gunfire, the curriculum teaches that violence in real life is not what they have seen in the media for most of their lives. STAR is used in metropolitan areas across the country, including New York, Los Angeles, Oakland, and Dade County, Florida (Brady 1993).

Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation

More than one hundred conflict-resolution curricula are available for middle and high school students. One of the most widely used and highly regarded is the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, which began in 1985 and is used in 150 schools (Lawton). In addition to curricula, the National Association for Mediation in Education estimates that several hundred peer-conflict-mediation programs are operating in U.S. schools (M. Van Slyck and M. Stern 1991).

As is the case with violence-prevention curricula, formal evaluation of conflict-mediation programs is sparse. In one of the few such evaluations, Van Slyck in 1986 assessed a middle school peer-mediation program in New York State and found that it resulted in a significant improvement in the school-discipline climate. Ratings of student participation in solving school problems, feelings of school involvement, responsibility for enforcing rules, perceptions of school discipline as good, and staff-student ability to discuss problems all showed positive increases. Furthermore, an increased sense of duty, responsibility, and concern for others was experienced by peer media-

tors. Seventy-five percent of the disputants who used the program reported they probably would have had a fight if they had not been referred to mediation.

An Elementary School Program

Laurel Elementary School in Junction City has had a peer-mediation program for six years. Child Development Specialist Hershel Olmstead currently oversees the selection, training, and supervision of peer mediators, who are called PCMs, short for Peer Conflict Managers.

"We select and train between twenty and thirty PCMs each year," said Olmstead. "Students can become conflict managers when they reach third grade. There is no shortage of volunteers." Olmstead is careful to help teachers select students who are good self-managers, since PCMs are required to leave class to cover recess for first- and second-graders, and are responsible for making up any work they miss.

Training takes place at an all-day workshop at the school. First, students learn listening and empathy skills and practice communication and cooperation in exercises with each other. Then they are taught a specific process that PCMs use to help others resolve their differences peacefully. PCMs are assigned one or more recesses to patrol, usually in pairs. Weekly meetings are held to allow PCMs to debrief and to brainstorm solutions to sticky situations.

"It's a big commitment for kids this age to make," said Olmstead, "And there occasionally are some problems with PCMs being picked on by some of their peers. That's where our weekly meetings help a lot." Olmstead said that the mediation program seems to be a natural outgrowth espoused by the philosophy of Laurel staff. "We try to empower kids to learn, to take care of themselves, and to take care of each other."

A High School Program

Portland's Roosevelt High School has had a peer-mediation program for five years. It is directed by Sarah Friedel, who divides her time between conflict-management coordinator and drug and alcohol specialist. The Roosevelt program is based on the Community Board mediation program in San Francisco. It involves about thirty Roosevelt High youth from a student body of nine hundred.

Friedel recruits students by asking for referrals from teachers, but she is particularly interested in recommendations from coaches and the security staff, who see students in less-structured situations and have a better sense of which students show leadership potential. Even though leadership potential is present, it may not be exercised in a positive direction. Friedel said, "I've had

staff say, 'How can you even think of recruiting that student? He's failing four classes!' But we have brought some students back from the brink by involving them in our program."

Friedel pushes hard for inclusiveness, to reflect the diversity that is represented at Roosevelt. Training, which takes place at a weekend retreat, is culturally sensitive. The Power Shuffle, which Friedel learned from Portland State Educational Network staff member Anna Cooprider, is one exercise that seems to affect participants deeply. All the students stand in a big circle, and then the leader instructs anyone who has been called a racial name to step into the circle. Next, she asks students to look around and see who is in the circle with them and who is not. By turns, Friedel asks students to step into the circle for a number of other reasons, for example, if they have felt inferior for being poor. "It's an extremely powerful exercise," said Friedel. "It helps kids understand how a person is affected by powerlessness in a dominant culture. The mediators learn to maintain more of a neutral process in working on conflict resolution—clear of biases or stereotypes, or personal stance."

By informing incoming freshmen about conflict-resolution options and educating them about the program at Roosevelt, staff members ensure that students understand the process and availability of student-mediation services. About 75 percent of the disputants who use the program ask for a session. The other 25 percent accept an invitation from Friedel to resolve their conflict through student mediation. "The issues that our mediators help students struggle with can be very serious here at the high school level," said Friedel, "such as infidelity in a supposedly monogamous relationship."

Initially, staff members at Roosevelt were reluctant to participate in conflict-management sessions facilitated by student mediators, even though the service was intended to help resolve staff/student conflict as well as conflicts between students. But Friedel said the situation has changed. In the first three months of the school year, student mediators have already helped resolve twelve staff/student disputes.

Although the program has not been formally evaluated, Friedel said the mediators serve more students every year. "Administrators tell me they don't know how they ever got along without our program," she noted. "It seems that in many situations, students can do a better job of mediating conflict than the traditional authority figures at the school."

Domestic-Violence Prevention

Many children and adults are victims of some form of violence in their homes. Yet in American society, the family has to handle its affairs privately. Because of this, school-based prevention efforts must carefully weave their

way through a minefield of domestic issues, while attempting to encourage mutual respect in relationships between parents and children, men and women, boys and girls. As such efforts try to help children understand their rights and avoid victimization by adults or other youth, traditional holders of power in the family may become defensive. Efforts to educate students about how to form healthy personal relationships should take into account the issue of family privacy.

A Curriculum to Prevent Domestic Violence

In 1991, The Domestic Violence Review, commissioned by Manitoba Justice in Canada, recommended that schools in Manitoba integrate a component on domestic violence into the curriculum. The result was a curriculum developed for grades 5 through 8 called Violence Prevention in Daily Life and in Relationships. In thirteen lessons, the unit raises awareness and understanding of the nature of conflict and violence, and it increases sensitivity to issues of abuse in daily life and personal relationships. Children are taught how to productively handle conflict and anger, to recognize warning signs exhibited by those who are prone to violence, and to develop their personal values and attitudes toward coercion and violence.

The goal, developers of this curriculum note, is to help children understand and form healthy relationships. Toward this end, they defend the decision to address in the school setting the issue of domestic abuse:

> Children come to school as whole persons, with intellect, emotions, values, attitudes, and behaviors. Children who are witnesses to violence in the home or community, or who are victims, or who may be victimizers, do not leave these experiences at the door when they enter the classroom. Teachers are called upon to respond to the real and immediate needs of children as they present themselves. Schools are called upon to ameliorate the situation of children who are victims. The role of schools is also to promote the development of an environment in which all persons are safe to learn and to strive for self-realization. (Manitoba Department of Education and Training 1993)

Sexual Harassment and Abuse

Eugene Public Schools provides teachers with a curriculum designed to encourage respectful relationships between boys and girls. Developed by the Minnesota Department of Education, the two units are "Girls and Boys Getting Along," aimed at grades K through 6, and "Sexual Harassment to Teenagers: It's Not Fun, It's Illegal," which targets grades 7 through 12.

"We developed the curriculum because of legislation that all schools in our state have a policy on sexual harassment. If we are serious about prevent-

ing harassment, it seems we should teach kids what it is and what to do if it happens," said Cyndy Hanson, of the Minnesota Department of Education. "We received several awards for that curriculum, because it was the first of its kind in the country." As an indicator of the sensitivities aroused by these issues, Hanson says the curriculum is under review by the department because of complaints that children should not be exposed to the topic of sexual harassment in school. After review, the curriculum will again become available through the Minnesota Department of Education.

Eugene Public Schools also uses a curriculum developed by specialists to help children avoid becoming victims of sexual or physical abuse. SafeTouch is used in grades K through 5, and The Child Abuse Curriculum in grades 6 through 8. According to Nancy Johnson, drug-education project assistant in the district, teachers often deal with topics such as rape, harassment, and gender issues by integrating them into other curriculum, such as social studies. Decision-making skills and the risks and consequences of behavior between boys and girls are included in mandated education programs about HIV infection and drug and alcohol abuse.

Pregnant Teens

Educators recognize that keeping pregnant teens and teen parents in school is a powerful violence-prevention program. In 1987, Eugene's Churchill High School began the Teen Parent Program to serve pregnant teens and teenage parents. Funded by grants, fees, and school district funds, the program has served 150 teen mothers and fathers.

Joanne Miksis, program coordinator, points out a number of program functions that support the well-being of families and children. By providing free child care to teen parents who regularly attend school, the program encourages teen parents to finish their high school education rather than drop out. Said Miksis, "I know we are a successful program if only because 68 percent of the parents who graduate from here go on to some form of higher education." Since the program's inception, only three parents have become pregnant a second time while in school. "I think that says a lot about the effectiveness of the program in keeping youth from getting trapped in a pattern of self-defeating behavior," said Miksis.

Forty-five children from six weeks to six years old are cared for in the child-care center. Nineteen are the children of teen parents, and the rest are children of teachers or parents who live in the surrounding community. All benefit from a very low staff/child ratio. Children receive some social-skills training, though the primary emphasis is on language development. All the children receive daily one-on-one time with a staff member for reading, talking, and exploring. The program enables teen parents to observe appro-

priate parenting techniques modeled by staff. Teen parents also attend a daily seminar in which they receive instruction on parenting methods and support in dealing with common issues that parents must contend with during their children's early years, such as getting children to sleep, teething, and feeding.

Having the day-care center at the school makes it possible for Churchill to offer all students hands-on experience with supervising and interacting positively with children. Through an elective called "Exploring Childhood," students learn about children and parenting. Miksis estimates that 75 percent of the student body takes the class before graduation. On Mondays, the entire class listens to speakers and receives instruction from teachers. The class is then split in half, with two days each week spent in small-group instruction and two in the day-care center with the children. This increases the exposure of the children in the center to care, while giving the students a chance to apply the skills they are being taught. "I sometimes run into former students of the "Exploring Childhood" class in the community after they have graduated and started families," said Miksis. "They almost always tell me that the things they learned in parenthood class are what they use the most in their lives."

Multicultural Issues

Under Oregon's Educational Act for the 21st Century, "Understanding Diversity" is one of the requisite educational outcomes for the Certificate of Initial Mastery. John Lenssen, civil rights specialist and substance abuse specialist at the Oregon Department of Education, estimates that one hundred school districts in Oregon have provided the opportunity for staff to participate in "Project REACH," a curriculum developed in the state of Washington that teaches middle school students how to respect ethnic and cultural differences.

Before schools can expect students to understand diversity, educators themselves must understand it better. "The ODE plans to sponsor further training for teachers," said Lenssen. One of his favorite consciousness-raising activities is "BARNGA," a multicultural card game. A large group is divided into smaller groups that learn to play the card game at different tables. The rules are slightly different at each table, but the players are not aware of this. When some of the players are later moved to different tables, the participants have an experience that simulates the conflict that can arise when different cultures come into contact. "We lead the players through a series of followup exercises to help them learn how to resolve these conflicts respectfully and peacefully," said Lenssen.

Bettie Sing Luke, multicultural/equity training specialist in Eugene Public Schools, offers inservice training to heighten teachers' multicultural

awareness. Sing Luke educates teachers about cultural differences that might affect their teaching strategies. For example, if teachers want students to learn how to give oral reports, they must first understand that many children come to that experience with a different cultural value about some of the skills involved. "Teachers like their students to give eye contact to the audience when making oral reports," said Sing Luke. "But students from some cultures may believe that direct eye contact is disrespectful." Sensitive teachers approach teaching skills for effective oral presentations in a way that makes the acquisitions of these skills more manageable for those students who ascribe different meaning to them.

Sing Luke says that the district's middle schools use a multicultural curriculum called Project Reach, which helps students understand cultural differences such as "out-country" and "in-country" groups. Students are expected to research their own culture as part of the curriculum. They also create maps or other visual displays and sometimes prepare ethnic foods, which are presented at a cultural fair in the evening. "It is extremely important that people come to understand and appreciate their own culture as a first step toward multicultural awareness," said Sing Luke. "If not, two things can happen. One, as people learn about other cultures, they may begin to feel deficient in their own. That can lead to resentment and conflict. Two, studying other cultures before studying one's own can lead to what I call the 'microscope effect,' in which others are dehumanized or dissected without understanding and empathy. It can lead to disrespectful treatment."

At Eugene's Whiteaker Elementary School, 29 percent of the student body is Hispanic. The school has a half-time ESL teacher to help Hispanic students learn English. Every flier or newsletter sent home with children is in Spanish as well as English. Two half-time staff members, supported by Title VII funding, teach reading and math in Spanish. Ansalmo Villanueva, the district's minority-community liaison, provides outreach services to Spanish-speaking parents with children at Whiteaker. In conjunction with the summer food program coordinated through the school, in which children can receive free breakfast and lunch from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a multicultural reading and story time is provided called Skipping Stones.

Anger Management

Although research indicates that even small children can be taught anger-management skills, many individuals reach adulthood without discovering how to handle their anger constructively. "Anger is all about 'now'," said John Aarons, Lane County Youth Services counselor. "Once anger has taken over, there is no room for thought about anything else. Not family, not friends, not the future." Anger is as old as humanity, but the dangers of

losing everything to it are much greater in a time when there seems to be a weapon in every other pocket.

All violence-prevention curricula contain lessons on anger management, and all children can benefit from practicing self-control. Some clearly need extra help in this area, both in elementary school and in the higher grades. Brandt Stuart, a licensed professional counselor who provides services to some Eugene schools, leads anger-management groups for teens referred by school staff. Stuart runs ten-week groups with mixed ages, from freshman to senior, because "older kids tend to be more mature. They have an opportunity to be looked up to, and can often model the skills they're learning."

Skills include becoming aware of feelings, finding new ways of expressing them, and learning how to relax in stressful situations. Stuart uses traditional methods such as art therapy and role playing, but he believes adventure-based activities can also be an important part of anger-management training. "A lot of kids who have anger problems have high stimulation needs, and fighting with each other provides lots of excitement," said Stuart, who helps youth find more appropriate thrills.

Aarons, along with John Crumbley and Wade Fraser, his colleagues at Lane County Youth Services, teach anger management to groups of youth who have been mandated by the court to undergo such training. Teens from Lane County schools can also be referred to these groups by school counselors or administrators. Aarons also provides inservice training to teachers and counselors on how to hone students' anger-management skills. Every quarter, a community anger-management class is open to Lane County parents and their children. The curriculum used by the counselors, Developing Options to Anger, can be used with individuals, or with small or large groups (John Crumbly, John Aarons, and Wade Fraser 1992).

"Our anger-management groups are skills based," said Aarons. " And no one can graduate from our groups until they can display the skills we're teaching them." In addition to exploring with students the risks and consequences of uncontrolled anger, Aarons' system contains four basic steps. First, students learn to recognize physical cues that indicate anger is rising, such as a rapid heartbeat or sweaty palms.

Second, students learn to recognize and talk about the feelings that precede anger, such as hurt or embarrassment. "Talk to elementary school students and you'll find they have a long list of feelings," said Aarons. "Many teenagers seem to have about three, two of which are 'fine' and 'mad.' That's not a list that encourages success in relationships." By recognizing, understanding, and dealing with feelings that precede anger, people can derail anger before it builds up steam and find more satisfaction in their daily relationships.

Third, group members are instructed in how to take time to be at their best before dealing with situations in which anger is a potential. This means physically relaxing, ferreting out anger-inducing self-talk and replacing it with self-talk about their worth, the value of their relationships, and the importance of keeping on track for the future.

Finally, students are taught to "unhook" from anger. "Letting go" is the core metaphor that helps students unhook. Letting go can be expressed in self-talk such as, "I can't control everything" or "Tomorrow is another day" or simply "It's not worth it."

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Identified by the American Psychological Association as one of four major contributors to the increase in violent behavior (Walker 1994), drug and alcohol abuse has been the target of prevention programs by mandate from the state of Oregon. Beginning in kindergarten and increasing in detail and specificity of skills through the fourth grade, instruction of students at Laurel Elementary School in Junction City emphasize recognizing drug abuse for what it is—a high-risk behavior that can ultimately end in death.

Through use of the "Here's Looking at You, 2000" curriculum, all students are taught how illicit drug and alcohol abuse differs from taking prescribed medication. Children learn to talk about how drugs or alcohol may have affected their own lives while respecting the privacy of their families and friends. Perhaps most importantly, there is an attempt to create a peer culture that is against drug use and to teach children how to refuse to engage in high-risk behavior without having to feel like "nerds."

Many schools combine school staff functions to provide specialized services to youth who are especially at risk or already involved in drug or alcohol abuse. For example, Sara Friedel, who coordinates the peer-mediation program for Roosevelt High School in Portland, is also the building drug and alcohol specialist, offering individual and group services to students. Brandt Stuart, who is under contract to lead anger-management groups for some Eugene schools, also has contracted to offer groups specializing in prevention of drug and alcohol abuse.

Gangs

Some curricula are specifically aimed at preventing gang involvement, but much of their content is similar to material used in more broad-based violence-prevention curriculum. As a result, some schools focus on basic skills and rely on lessons integrated into the regular curriculum to heighten

student awareness of the consequences of buying into a gang philosophy. In Portland, curriculum development and staff training in the public schools focuses on empathy development, anger management, communication skills, and conflict resolution in grades K through 12. Because of the relatively high level of gang activity in Portland, the high schools developed antigang programs to support at-risk students. Oregon Outreach, an alternative education and placement program, was also created to serve gang-involved youth (Levine)

At North Eugene High School, Assistant Principal Pat Latimer said that "there are no certified gang members in attendance" at his school, according to information shared with school administrators by state police. Still, because of the presence of youth at North Eugene High who are clearly at risk for gang involvement, Latimer and his colleagues considered bringing in the Amer-I-Can antigang program developed by Jim Brown. Said Latimer, "the district could only fund two programs and we believed we had existing programs to help deal with the problem, consequently North Eugene was not selected." Instead of the Amer-I-Can program, staff members focus on providing anger-management and conflict-resolution groups. Individual students are exposed to information about the risks and consequences of gang involvement as part of the required English curriculum.

In fall 1994, Eugene's Willamette and Churchill High Schools brought in Chris Whiting to coordinate their Amer-I-Can program. Whiting said he is aware of the criticism that has been directed toward the program, but he thinks that "it can be both good or bad. You can't control how kids react to things. Whatever you do in this area runs the risk of being taken the wrong way." The value Whiting sees in allowing youth to hear from reformed gang members is that it drives home the message that gang involvement is a dead-end street and gives students hope that it is never too late to change.

Whiting said that administrators and counselors at Willamette High identify the twenty most at-risk youth and channel them into a semester-long course in which they learn and practice problem-solving skills, emotional control, and strategies for landing a job. As its title implies, self-esteem building is a major component of the program, and personal support in dealing with life issues is an important part of group meetings. Whiting identifies his most difficult task as getting participating students, who are often far behind in credit hours, to attend their other classes. Toward this end, he consults with other teachers and attempts to track student attendance.

For a more indepth accounting of schools' response to gangs, readers are referred to the May 1991 OSSC Bulletin *Schools Respond to Gangs and Violence* (Gaustad).

Chapter 5

Beyond the School Walls: Community Involvement

Much of the effort to protect children from violence is cast in defensive terms. Especially when surrounding communities have high crime rates, schools react against intrusive violence by throwing up the gates and arming the guards. But violence prevention requires schools and communities to bond, to act in concert to prevent the isolation and alienation of children from society. In this sense, it is the school's responsibility to throw open the doors and actively invite the community to become involved in the education and socialization of its children.

The Community Comes to School

Community members can become involved with the schools in several ways. Responsible, caring adults can offer mentoring relationships with youth that entail meeting and interacting at school. Parents can discover that schools offer resources in the areas of child care, parent education, and support. Professionals can come to offer their services to children and their families at the most accessible site, the school.

Mentor Programs

According to Community Outreach Coordinator Nancy English, Whiteaker Elementary School in Eugene has been "adopted" by the employees of Costco, a local retail business. Fourteen Cosco employees who have been paired with Whiteaker children come to the school to have lunch with them at least once a week. Two employees from another Eugene business, Washington Mutual, are also involved in mentoring students "I'm seeing some very real and important attachments developing here," said English.

Children and their mentors are free to interact outside of school hours if this is agreeable to the families involved.

Washington Mutual employees have also set up a banking program to encourage Whiteaker students to learn about saving money. Two parents were trained to keep records and do the necessary computer work. "It's the essence of mentoring," says English. "Two parents now have skills and a sense of competence that empowers them."

Joe Bierny, president of Networking for Youth, a Lane County grant-supported agency whose goal is to connect children with their communities, is convinced that mentoring relationships make a powerful difference in a child's life. According to Bierny, research suggests that "kids who drop out of school don't perceive that any adult who is significant to them wanted them to stay in school," and "most kids get their first jobs through knowing someone." Bierny has made it his mission "to create networks of opportunity for youth, kid by kid." With the superintendents of the Bethel, Springfield, and Eugene Public Schools sitting on the board of Networking for Youth, Bierny gets a lot of support from area schools.

Mentors are recruited through presentations made to groups such as the Rotary and Kiwanas, and to local business organizations. Up to one hundred Eugene and Springfield high school youth selected by counselors and administrators are paired by gender, vocational, and personal interests with volunteers from the community. Although this is only the second year of the program, Bierny said he has already seen some remarkable success stories. For example, a student who was paired with a surgeon is now getting work experience in a medical setting.

Networking for Youth trains mentors in the stages of the mentoring relationship and the skills involved in mentoring. Ongoing support through further training and consultation helps keep interest and activity high. Bierny envisions the creation of a network of mentors that extends down to the elementary school level. Toward that end, staff members at Networking for Youth are exploring ways to support and link mentoring programs that have been created by individual schools.

Child Care and Parent Education

In chapter 4, the child-care program at Churchill High School was described as essential for keeping teen parents in school and their children in high-quality care. The presence of infant, toddler, and preschool children in the school also provides the opportunity for all students to get hands-on experience with parenting activities. Whiteaker Elementary School also houses a daycare center for children from six weeks up. In addition to sliding-scale fees, the center works with Adult and Family Services and

Children's Services Division to provide low-cost or free child care to low-income families. Teachers' children are also offered child care at the center, which creates a heterogeneous population of children and families.

Parent education has become increasingly common in schools. For the past five years, Laurel Elementary School in Junction City has offered all district parents free parent-education classes and special speakers in conjunction with Lane Community College. A parent resource center was set up in the school media center to encourage parents to check out videotapes, audiotapes, and books about parenting. At Whiteaker Elementary, the nonprofit private agency Birth to Three offers a parent-education class every Monday night called Make Parenting a Pleasure.

Both schools have made special outreach efforts to involve high-risk families who might not otherwise view the school as a friendly institution. At Whiteaker, twelve families participate in a weekly evening program called Embracing the Family, which receives financial support from the Oregon Office of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention. The families enjoy a meal together at the school, then children are cared for while parents learn about building healthy, happy families.

At Laurel Elementary, Principal John Davies secured a one-year grant of special-education money in 1992-93 from the Oregon Department of Education to implement a joint parent/teacher education program for the families and teachers of high-risk children. The families of three children from each classroom were sent a letter of invitation. The letter invited them, as well as their child's teacher, to attend two three-hour seminars on behavior management at the school.

After the written invitation was sent, each child's teacher contacted the family to personally request parents to come to the inservice so they could work together to develop a plan for improving the child's behavior. Childcare was provided, and transportation to the school was offered. In addition to receiving basic parent education at each seminar, led by behavior consultant Randy Sprick, parents were paired with teachers, counselors, or other specialists to develop a plan that would be used both at home and school to affect one or two problem behaviors. "It was an exciting and fruitful venture," said Davies. "I think the model has great potential for providing parent education and at the same overcoming barriers between parents and school staff."

Community Agencies in the Schools

In some situations, education alone is not sufficient. More intensive interventions may prevent children and families from becoming overwhelmed by stress factors that can lead to violence. To increase the accessi-

bility of therapy and social-work services, many professionals are setting up shop in the school. As noted in chapter 4, community agencies often provide counseling services to children and families in the school.

At Whiteaker Elementary, a panel of professionals from AFS, CSD, and the community-police program, along with a school nurse, social workers, and the Looking Glass child and family therapist, form the Whiteaker Family Team. Together, these professionals seek to make a systematic intervention in the interest of family health. "For the first time, we're beginning to get a handle on working together for families," said Nancy English, Whiteaker community-outreach coordinator. With the school as a site for sharing information and a springboard for intervention, each part of the team contributes to the concerted effort to prevent families from failing because of lack of skills, support, or resources.

Law-enforcement agencies are cooperating with schools in dealing with illegal conduct that occurs at schools. Sergeant Dave Poppe supervises the three police officers who spend time on Eugene high school campuses in the Safer Schools Program. Although this is the third time in twenty-four years that Eugene police have ventured onto high school campuses, Poppe notes a "much improved communication system" this time around, especially with assistant principals who are in charge of discipline. Information is shared in both directions on youth who are acting out or who are involved in graffiti vandalism, so that prevention and intervention are more timely and well orchestrated.

Students Connect with Their Community

To complete the circle that protects children from the risk factors of isolation and alienation, schools must cultivate options for students to extend their learning opportunities into community settings. Under standards set for gaining the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM), students must document fifty hours of community service over a two-year period. Community vocational placements in which students can gain high school credit through cooperative work experience will be increasingly important whether students plan to end their formal education with the CIM or go on to obtain the Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM).

Community Service

Michele Portmann, counselor at Cottage Grove High School and coordinator of the school's community-service program, would like to present the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce at the end of the school year with a "check" for the number of service hours provided by the students

in her program. She said her only problem is "finding the time and the right system to accurately document the hours that students put in." She is certain the check would be sizable. In the first two months of the 1994-95 school year, thirty-four students donated well over two hundred hours of community-service time.

Portmann advertises opportunities for community service on bulletin boards, through daily announcements, and on Channel 1, a video/communications system that operates in all classrooms. As Lieutenant Governor of the Cottage Grove Kiwanas, she is aware of community-service projects ranging from raking leaves for senior or disabled citizens to taking a turn running everything except the camera for the local Easter Seal Telethon.

In a Big Brother/Big Sister type program called Positive Alternatives that Help, thirty high school students are paired as mentors with elementary school students. Each year, a number of Cottage Grove students participate in the statewide beach cleanup sponsored by Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism (SOLV). The Blood Bank comes to the Cottage Grove campus three times a year, and students give blood and assist in the bloodmobile operation. Each year, the freshman class chooses a cause (for example, during the first year of the program, child-abuse prevention was selected) and puts on talent shows to heighten awareness of the issue and to raise money to donate to agencies that address the issue.

Cooperative Work Experience

The cooperative-work-experience (CWE) contract is a form of community involvement that educates youth to be responsible citizens with a stake in the future. The contract requires four signatures—the student's, the parents', the employer's, and the school's CWE coordinator. Junction City High School's CWE coordinator, Marcy Prevics, has been arranging work experience opportunities for students in the Willamette Valley off and on for the past fifteen years.

Students can earn up to the equivalent of two classes per semester of high school credits by working for twenty hours in a business that reflects in some substantial way the student's vocational aspirations. For example, a student who is training in the school's autoshop might be placed with an auto parts retailer, or a student in Accounting II could work in an accountant's office.

The businesses that participate in the Junction City program usually pay students minimum wage, even though the new state CWE regulations don't require students to be paid at all. The rules are simple. Students must show up for work regularly and put in their best effort, while the businesses must recognize the level of the student's competence and help increase it. To

monitor student progress, Prevics often makes surprise appearances at placements, even though this often means she has to put in evening or weekend hours. Students must write a weekly report and complete a short assignment each semester telling about their placement and what they have learned.

Prevics provides students with more than initial placement and supervision. She helps students obtain work permits and food-handler's cards when necessary. She gives students feedback on drafts of resumés and cover letters, and she coaches students in job interviewing skills. She also takes students through mock interviews. Because computers are now a part of nearly every business, Prevics trains students in basic computer operation—word processing, databases, and spreadsheets.

In the past several years, Prevics has placed students with about thirty different businesses from Eugene to Corvallis, and she is constantly alert for more placement opportunities. "Sometimes a work placement slot will be taken up for years by a student who has already graduated, because the arrangement has worked out well for both parties," said Prevics. "It makes my job a little harder, but these are the kinds of problems we like to have."

Conclusion

It should be clear by now that preventing violence in the schools is a task that requires educators to accept responsibility for much more than developing children's minds. Every child who comes to school hungry must be fed. Every child who doesn't seem to feel a heart-to-heart connection with anyone outside the immediate family, and perhaps not even there, must be provided with the opportunity to love. Every child who displays contempt for others must be held accountable and taught that mutual respect is the only acceptable medium for relationships. Every child who lacks the social skills to interact appropriately with others must be taught these skills. Every hopeless child must be given at the least the opportunity to hope.

The framework that will provide for the child's development as a social being must be broad and durable. Broad, to reach the wide-ranging roots of violent behavior, and durable to withstand the momentarily gratifying impulse to focus on the punishment and isolation of troubled children rather than persevere at teaching peace, a task that all agree is a long-term project.

The implications for school boards and administrators were detailed in chapter 3. District and building policies must support the development of positive relationships among staff and children by setting clear standards for behavior. Services offered by the district should help staff meet personal and professional needs for growth and self-nurturance so that they can rise to the challenge of caring for children in difficult circumstances. Principals must be aware that positive interactions with staff offer a model for appropriate staff/student relationships. Just as power sharing with staff extends the web of community responsibilty, so does involving students in classroom decisions and conflict resolution. Violence prevention becomes an effective, concerted effort when school boards and administrators set the tone for the school community with appropriate policies, programs, and practices.

It may be true that parents should be doing all these things. A few won't. Many more simply can't, at least not without help. Social and eco-

nomic circumstances aside, adverse effects are incurred by all children who attend school in an atmosphere of fear, surrounded by a peer culture increasingly steeped in violence. It's unproductive to spend time assigning blame. Instead, for the sake of all children, we must work together to curb the cancer of violence.

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